Benefits of the Improvement Plan

eICS provides a comprehensive set of features to assess and improve your response strategies. While you plan for, respond to, and recover from incidents, you can simultaneously use features built into the system to record and track improvements.Improvement items and actions can be added at any time. During an incident, improvement items can be added through the Event Log. After an incident, you can assess these and other items, such as objectives, messages, and other events, to determine whether they should be included in the improvement plan.

Compliance and Standards

Your organization probably runs drills and exercises on a regular basis to test your plan and response. Exercises help you document response activities, proving your organization followed the processes outlined in the compliance objectives. This, in turn, helps provide support for accreditation and prove compliance with established emergency management standards.eICS features aid you in identifying potential opportunities for improving not only the plan, but also the response guides and activities.

Exercise

Organizations can spend 12-18 months planning and setting up an exercise designed to address an overall objective, such as successfully completing a set of activities. For a hospital, this might be triaging or transporting patients and ensuring they get the appropriate care. For a business, this might be evacuating the building due to a crisis and handling any resultant injuries. For any type of organization, this might be a cyber-attack or other IT-related situation.After the exercise, a "hot wash" occurs. During the hot wash, exercise participants and stakeholders meet to discuss the exercise and evaluate performance across the board. Based on the results, small to large changes can be implemented. Changes can range from adding new objectives to a particular position and developing new strategies that call for restructuring the ICS chart to enhancing the appropriate incident response guide.

eICS Features

An organization wants to do their best to plan for the unexpected, or anything outside normal, daily operations. Unplanned events can include a major disaster or an unexpected operational disruption, such as the need to swap out a server in your IT department. In either case, you can use eICS to improve your plan and response guides.

Remember that eICS provides built-in recovery features. For example:

- After an incident or an exercise, creating your improvement plan in eICS is a key part of building your after action report.
- Use eICS to address daily operations and disruptions. Note situations that may not be addressed in your plan or its incident response guides and include them as improvement items.
- During an incident or exercise, keep your eyes open for situations or gaps that may need to be addressed in your plan. Make use of eICS's built-in features to flag events for later evaluation.
- After an incident, use eICS features to assess the incident's messages, objectives, and other events and build improvement plan items from them.
- After a hot wash or other post-response activities, regularly review the plan and the items added to it, assign responsibilities where appropriate, follow up on in-progress items, and keep aware of action item due dates.

All identified improvement and action items can be tracked and monitored through the Improvement Plan features in eICS. Identifying and tracking improvement opportunities during the course of or after an incident helps you continually improve your plan, and, ultimately, the overall operations plan itself.